

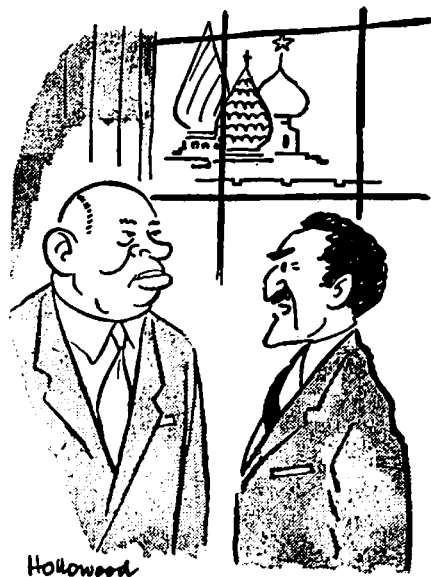
• Abroad •

Paris, France. There are at least a few Europeans who remain undazzled by President Eisenhower's triumphal march. The noted writer, André François-Poncet, begins a meditative article in *Le Figaro*: "If Khrushchev happens to reflect—as he surely does—that hardly three years have gone by since the civilized world, turning away in horror, stigmatized him as the butcher of Hungary, and that today he is awaited as an official guest of the United States, where he will be welcomed with brilliant ceremonies, indulgent smiles and friendly arms on his shoulders, he has no occasion to be dissatisfied with himself, nor with his policy, nor with his attitude of the West, nor with the road he has so far traveled, nor with the new perspectives that open out before his eyes."

Madrid, Spain. The economic attachés of the major embassies in Madrid are increasingly skeptical about the results that may be expected from last spring's economic reform. The ostensible premise was a general liberalization of the strangled Spanish economy. On this basis the United States granted massive credits and promised more to come. The peseta has in fact been made convertible, with a devaluation of 40 per cent from the old official rate. Otherwise nothing much has happened except talk. Foreign firms discover that they can do business in Spain only under the customary load of bureaucracy and graft. The already astronomic tariffs on many manufactured goods are being raised, not lowered. Not only minor bureaucrats but Ministers and generals expect their "commissions" on nominally private as well as governmental transactions. Meanwhile the monetary devaluation is bringing a rise in prices and new demands for inflationary wage increases that will soon threaten the precarious convertibility. The message brought by Foreign Minister Castiella to President Eisenhower in London was, in substance: please get ready to bail us out once again.

Brussels, Belgium. Since last winter, the common stock of *Union Minière*—the great enterprise that is the world's largest copper producer, holds a virtual monopoly of cobalt, and dominates the entire economy of the Belgian Congo—has fallen from 8,000 to 2,800 Belgian francs per share. This drop has taken place while profits have been soaring with improvement in the world economy and a rise in the price of copper from last year's lows. The explanation is of course the fears provoked by the Negro anti-colonial movement which six months ago, spreading from French Africa, broke into the Belgian Congo's first violent demonstrations. Within the past few weeks, the *Union Minière* stock has advanced somewhat from its low point. Confidential investigation by a Belgian syndicate has found that certain West German and U.S. interests—convinced that even complete political independence for the Congo need not mean an end to the *Union Minière* operation—have quietly begun buying it in.

London, England. As a tidbit in its election offering to the British voters, the Conservative Party has raised the blood pressure of many of its own Colonel Blimps as well as of the Labor leaders by a new semi-official pamphlet, "The Challenge of Leisure." The prosperity-brought leisure of the masses is to be filled, according to the pamphlet's proposals, by a government-directed and government-subsidized program in sports and the arts: everything from museums, theaters, opera, grants to artists, to "lighted playing fields, running tracks and gymnasiums." The arts are particularly stressed as the answer to juvenile delinquency, since "they provide a bulwark against boredom which we recognize as a special problem of youth."



©Punch, Ben Roth

"In the unlikely event of your returning completely convinced of the superiority of private enterprise—what then?"

Bonn, German Federal Republic. The accounts of the remarkable economic advance of Continental Europe during the past decade, in particular of West Germany's "economic miracle," have obscured the fact that the British standard of living continues to be, though less so than in the past, higher than that of the Continental nations. The relation is shown in a comparative survey just made of major appliances possessed by British and West German households. In terms of "saturation," typical figures are:

	British	W. German
Television	67%	20%
Telephones	50%	25%
Autos	33%	25%
Washing Machines	25%	25%
Refrigerators	10%	20%

The British of all classes are aware that their higher material standard has been sustained, at least in part, by Britain's special economic connections with the empire and dominions overseas, and by her role as entrepot for the Continent. This almost intuitive belief has much to do with Britain's negative attitude toward the Common Market. Britishers sense that within a European Common Market there must take place a long-term equalizing of living standards, and that for Britain this would mean, relatively at least, an equalizing downward.

Copyright of National Review Bulletin is the property of National Review Inc. and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.